

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, XC, US

SUBJECT: MARCH 29 INDOCHINA PRESS SUMMARY

1. RICHARDSON TELLS HILL NEWSMEN IN ADVANCE OF CLOSED-DOOR SASC TESTIMONY THAT PRESIDENT HAS CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY TO CONTINUE BOMBING CAMBODIA TO CLEAN UP "LINGERING CORNER OF THE WAR." MANSFIELD DISAGREES, SAYING AUTHORITY RESTS ON TROOP PRESENCE. JAVITS TO QUESTION PROPRIETY, LEGALITY OF BOMBING. RICHARDSON STRESSES FACT KHMER C- F NOT YET ACHIEVED AND US ACTING AT GKR REQUEST. NYT' S FINNEY NOTES RICHARDSON REFERENCE TO LON NOL GOVERNMENT AS " ALLY,, GOING BEYOND PREVIOUS ADMIN STATEMENTS. FINNEY ALSO NOTES PRESIDENT SAID ON CAMBODIA INCURSION THAT, AFTER JULY 1, 1970 ANY US AIR OPS IN CAMBODIA WOULD BE TO INTERDICT ENEMY MOVEMENTS WHICH HE CONSIDERED NEEDED TO PROTECT US TROOPS IN SVN.

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2. FINNEY ALSO QUOTES ASST. SEC. MARSHALL GREEN BEFORE HFAC THAT BOMBING HAS POLITICAL PURPOSE OF PRESSURING

HANOI TO ACCEPT KHMER C- F. ACCORDING FINNEY AND WP, GREEN SAID " IT TAKES A COMBINATION OF A CLENCHED FIRST WITH ONE HAND AND AN OPEN HAND WITH THE OTHER TO BRING ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THESE CHARACTERS IN HANOI." GREEN DECLINED DISCUSS CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY TO BOMB. ADMIN SAID TO BELIEVE EXISTENCE OF NVN FORCES IN CAMBODIA ALONG SVN BORDER VIOLATES VN AGREEMENT, AND INFORMED SOURCES SAY BOMBING JUSTIFIED BY VN AGREEMENT AND US COMMITMENT UNDER SEATO TO PROTECT SVN. GREEN DENIES DEPUTY ASST. SEC. SULLIVAN SAID JUSTIFICATION FOR BOMBING IS PRESIDENT' S RE- ELECTION, BUT DECLINES SAY EXACTLY WHAT SULLIVAN SAID BECAUSE " THAT WOULD VIOLATE THE RULES OF THE MEETING." MANSFIELD SAYS US PUT ITSELF INTO POSITION OF " KEEPING IN POWER" REGIME IN CAMBODIA THAT LACKS POPULAR SUPPORT, AND IS " DOING IT WITH THE POWER OF B-52 S" (NYT, SUN).

3. CINCPAC ANNOUNCES BOMBING OF KHMER LOC THROUGHOUT CAMBODIA FOR 22 ND STRAIGHT DAY (SUN).

4. PHINQ SAYS BITTER BATTLE SHAPING UP ON HILL OVER CAMBODIA BOMBING JUSTIFICATION ISSUE. PHINQ AND NYDN REPORT RICHARDSON SAID PRESIDENT AS COMMANDER- IN- CHIEF HAS AUTHORITY CONTINUE BOMBING IN CAMBODIA EVEN THOUGH US FORCES LEFT SVN. RICHARDSON ALSO REQUESTS FUNDS TO CORRECT STRUCTURAL WEAKNESSES THAT HAVE DEVELOPED FROM HEAVY B-52 WORK LOAD OVER INDOCHINA. IN PREPARED STATEMENT, HE ESTIMATES THERE 230,000 VC/ NVA IN SVN, 70-90,000 NVA/ KI IN CAMBODIA, AND OVER 10,000 (SIC) NVA- PL IN LAOS (NYT).

5. HIGHLY- PLACED US OFFICIAL SAYS US URGED HANOI EXTEND LIFE OF FPJMC IN ORDER GET MUCH- VIOLATED C- F WORKING, BUT OTHER SIDE WASN' T ENTHUSIASTIC. BRAY SAYS FPJMC WILL END ITS TASK SATURDAY (NYT).

6. THIEU LAUNCHES HALF- MILLION- MEMBER DEMOCRACY PARTY TO COMPETE WITH COMMUNISTS IN ELECTIONS. NYT' S BUTTERFIELD SAYS THIEU HAS BEEN UNDER US EMBASSY PRESSURE TO BROADEN HIS POLITICAL SUPPORT. HAS RESISTED ATTEMPTS TO GET UNCLASSIFIED

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HIM BRING OPPOSITION FIGURES INTO GOVERNMENT BUT HAS SHOWN SPECIAL INTEREST IN ORGANIZING NEW PARTY. BUTTERFIELD SAYS MANY HAVE JOINED OUT OF CONCERN FOR KEEPING GOVERNMENT JOBS, SO DOUBTFUL HOW WELL PARTY WILL BE ABLE COMPETE WITH COMMUNISTS (NYT).

7. ALL PAPERS FEATURE RETURN OF LAST BATCH POWS. VC ANNOUNCE ONE MORE PRISONER TO RELEASE, ROBERT WHEME, BUT DOD HAS NO RECORD. THIEU BORROWS FROM LANGUAGE

OF GETTYSBURG ADDRESS TO THANK US SERVICEMEN IN
CORNERSTONE CEREMONY FOR MONUMENT TO 2.5 MILLION AMERICANS
WHO SERVED IN SVN. ALSO LAYS CORNERSTONE FOR MEMORIALS
TO RVNAF AND FREE WORLD FORCES (WP).

8. CSM' S SOUTHERLAND REPORTS US PLANS MAINTAIN SIZEABLE

PRESENCE IN SVN AND US SAIGON MISSION WILL REMAIN
LARGEST IN WORLD. HIGH- RANKING US OFFICIAL SAYS THERE
WILL BE " SOMETHING OVER 9,000" PERSONS FOR FORE-
SEEABLE FUTURE. LARGEST GROUP WILL BE CIVILIAN
CONTRACTORS TO MAINTAIN AND REPAIR VNAF, OPERATE COMMO
AND SUPPLY FACILITIES, AND TRAIN SVN TECHNICIANS.
ABOUT 5000 ON BOARD NOW BUT EXPECTED DROP TO 4000 BY
END OF YEAR. MANY CONTRACT PERSONNEL ARE FORMER
MILITARY. 900 USAID EMPLOYEES NOW UNDER NEW US RECON-
STRUCTION AND REFUGEE RELIEF DIRECTORATE. DAO STAFF
EXPECTED PERMANENTLY TO REMAIN UNDER 100 PEOPLE.
ONE WELL- INFORMED INTELLIGENCE SOURCE SAYS CIA PRESENCE
WON' T BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED (CSM).

9. LONDON- BASED INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES
ESTIMATES VN WAR COST US OVER \$108 BILLION IN CONTRAST
TO ESTIMATED \$1.66 BILLION SOVIET AND \$670 MILLION PRC
AID TO HANOI. AMONG OTHER THINGS, SURVEY SAYS US HAS
RETREATED FROM WORLD POLICEMAN TO MERELY SUPER POWER
(PHINQ).

10. US TECHNICAL EXPERTS UNDER MOSSLER DISCUSS POST-
WAR RECONSTRUCTION AID TO NVN WITH HANOI EXPERTS.
THEY WILL REPORT TO JEC MONDAY (SUN). SAIGON CURFEW
REDUCED ONE HOUR; NIGHT CLUBS AND RACE TRACK TO RE-
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OPEN (NYT). PODGORNYY AWARDS MEDAL TO BINH, SAYS IT
IS USSR' S INTERNATIONALIST DUTY TO SUPPORT VIETNAMESE
BROTHERS (NYDN).

11. CHITRIB' S KIRK REPORTS FROM VIENTIANE THAT HIGHLY-
INFORMED US SOURCES DOUBT IF MORE THAN 10-20 OF SOME
300 MIA STILL ALIVE. SOME INFORMANTS BELIEVE AS MANY
AS 100 MAY STILL BE CAPTIVE. KIRK ALSO INTERVIEWS
CANADIAN ICCS TEAM MEMBERS AT SVN OUTPOST AND REPORTS
THEIR LIFE BORING DUE LACK OF WORK.

12. ARMED THAI BAND HIJACKS BUSLOAD OF CIVILIAN
PASSENGERS AND DEMANDS TO BE FLOWN TO MOSCOW OR PEKING.
AFTER HOURS OF TENSE NEGOTIATIONS, THAI POLICE SEIZE
HIJACKERS AT BANGKOK AIRPORT. THANOM SAYS HIJACKERS
WERE COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS. GROUP SAID THEY WERE MEMBERS
OF THAI BLACK SEPTEMBER -- ORGANIZATION PREVIOUSLY

UNKNOWN TO AUTHORITIES (AP, NYT, PHINQ; REUTER, SUN, CHITRIB.)

13. KL FOREIGN OFFICE INDICATES GOM, IN KEEPING WITH POLICY OF EVEN- HANDED RELATIONS WITH ALL POWER BLOCS, WILL RECOGNIZE NVN IN NEXT FEW DAYS.

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14. NYT ASSERTS THAT US BOMBING IN CAMBODIA AFTER DISENGAGEMENT FROM VN WOULD RAISE MOST SERIOUS CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS. FOLLOWING REPEAL OF TONKIN GULF RESOLUTION, PRESIDENT' S SOLE JUSTIFICATION FOR OPERATIONS IN INDOCHINA HAS BEEN ALLEGED POWER TO PROTECT AMERICAN FORCES ENGAGED IN MILITARY ACTIONS. THIS DUBIOUS CLAIM EVAPORATES WITH DEPARTURE OF US TROOPS FROM VN. SO FAR, NEITHER DOD NOR DOS HAS BEEN ABLE COME UP WITH JUSTIFICATION FOR CAMBODIAN BOMBING. DOCTRINE OF PRESIDENTIAL INTERVENTION MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO STAND UNCHALLENGED, SINCE IT WOULD ESTABLISH PERILOUS PRECEDENT.

15. CSM EDITORIALIZES ON LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM VN WAR, WHICH MARKS END OF ERA WHICH WALTER LIPPMANN LABELS AS " ROMANTIC PERIOD OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM." WORLD IS NEW AND DIFFERENT. LET UNCLASSIFIED

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THERE BE NO MORE RECRIMINATION, ALTHOUGH WE SHOULD ALL THINK THROUGH EXPERIENCE TO BE SURE THAT WE HAVE DRAWN RIGHT LESSONS.

16. SUN SAYS MAIN INITIAL PROVISIONS OF PARIS AGREEMENT HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT, BUT NOTES US BOMBERS STILL OPERATE HEAVILY IN CAMBODIA, BECAUSE, IT IS SAID, ENEMY FORCES THERE HAVE DECLINED OBSERVE LON NOL' S UNILATERAL CEASE- FIRE. WITH RESPECT TO SVN, THAT PORTION OF AGREEMENT CALLING FOR INTERIM COALITION ARRANGEMENT MAY WORK OUT ONLY AFTER MUCH FIGHTING. IF VN FUTURE LIES AMONG VIETNAMESE THEMSELVES, OUTCOME IS HEAVILY CLOUDED BY DOUBTS AND UNCERTAINTIES.

17. CSM' S SAIKOWSKI SAYS PEACE IN INDOCHINA STILL TENUOUS BECAUSE OF CAMBODIA. FROM ADMINISTRATION' S STANDPOINT, WITHOUT C- F THERE, ALL INDOCHINA IS IN DANGER. IF KI FORCES ACHIEVE COMPLETE VICTORY, HANOI WILL IN EFFECT HAVE SAFE HAVEN FOR OPERATIONS AGAINST SVN; AND WITH CAMBODIAN SANCTUARY FIRMLY IN ITS POCKET, IT COULD NOT LET HO TRAIL GO. QUESTION NOW FOCUSES ON WHETHER NVN IS PUSHING GUERRILLAS NOT TO NEGOTIATE WITH PHNOM PENH BECAUSE THEY WANT TO USE CAMBODIA IN THEIR VN STRATEGY. DIFFICULTY IN STARTING

CAMBODIAN C- F TALKS STEMS FROM EXTREMELY MURKY POLITICAL SITUATION, WITH NO ONE TO SPEAK FOR MULTI-FACTIONED PRO- COMMUNIST SIDE AND PP GOVERNMENT ALSO IN TURMOIL. CITES SOME US OFFICIALS AS BELIEVING THERE MAY NEVER BE FORMAL C- F, MERELY TACIT UNDERSTANDING AMONG CONTENDERS.

18. PHINQ' S MCCARTNEY ALSO VIEWS VN PEACE AS FRAGILE. NOTES FIGHTING IN CAMBODIA WHICH JEOPARDIZES ENTIRE C- F AGREEMENT; UNCERTAINTIES REGARDING WHETHER HANOI WANTS PEACE; AND PRESIDENT' S APPARENT DESIRE TO RESERVE RIGHT TO RESUME BOMBING IN VN, AND TO CONTINUE BOMBING IN CAMBODIA, IF HE FEELS AGREEMENT BEING GROSSLY VIOLATED.

19. POST' S MARDER SAYS MOST DIFFICULT TESTS FOR RESTORING PEACE TO INDOCHINA STILL LIE AHEAD. PRO- VISIONS RELATING TO US POWS AND US TROOP WITHDRAWALS UNCLASSIFIED

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WERE RELATIVELY EASIEST TO ENFORCE. NOW MURKIEST SECTIONS OF DELIBERATELY AMBIGUOUS ACCORD ARE AT STAKE. NOTING PRESIDENT' S WARNING AGAINST MASSIVE COMMUNIST RE- INFILTRATION, MARDER SAYS US AIR POWER IS NOW ONLY REMAINING " EQUALIZER" TO MAINTAIN BALANCE OF FORCES IN SVN. FOR N AND SVN, CREDIBILITY AND DURABILITY OF THIS WARNING BECOMES OVERRIDING ISSUE NOW THAT US TROOPS ARE OUT. THIEU BOUND TO TRY PLUMB DEPTH OF THIS AMERICAN ASSURANCE.

20. POST' S GREENWAY, IN SAIGON, SUMMARIZES SVN MILITARY AND POLITICAL SITUATION FOR 60 DAYS FOLLOWING C- F ON NVN MILITARY ACTIVITIES, QUOTES SENIOR US DIPLOMAT AS SAYING " IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT HANOI IS KEEPING THE MILITARY OPTION OPEN IN CASE THEY DON' T GET WHAT THEY WANT POLITICALLY. GIVEN TRACK RECORD OF THE FPJMC, NOBODY IS VERY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE TPJMC. ICCS HAS FARED LITTLE BETTER." BUT GVN HAS COME OUT WITH MORE CONFIDENCE THAN WAS EXPECTED IN JANUARY.

21. NYT' S GWERTZMAN WRITES Q AND A PIECE ON HOW TRUCE ACCORD HAS AFFECTED INDOCHINA SITUATION. FINDS RESULTS SO FAR MIXED; " STANDSTILL C- F" HAS FAILED TO TAKE HOLD, WITH BOTH SIDES AT FAULT; ADMINISTRATION MIGHT AID SAIGON WITH AIR POWER IF NVN MOUNTS ALL- OUT OFFENSIVE WHICH SAIGON UNABLE TO COPE WITH; IN PEACE- KEEPING, ICCS BOGGED DOWN BY DISAGREEMENT AND INACTION, BUT HOPE IS THAT MOSCOW AND PEKING WILL PREVAIL ON HANOI AND SAIGON WILL HEED US PRESSURE TO SETTLE THROUGH DISCUSSIONS, NOT THROUGH ARMS; AND PEACE

IS TENUOUS IN LAOS AND CAMBOIDA. ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SAY AGREEMENT HAS SERVED US INTERESTS, BUT WHETHER IT SERVES THOSE OF HANOI, VC, OR SAIGON REMAINS TO BE SEEN. DOS ESTIMATES SOME 8000 US CIVILIANS REMAIN IN VN INCLUDING 1200 IN ATTACHE OFFICE.

22. NYT'S FOX, IN SAIGON, REPORTS VIEW OF HIGHLY PLACED WESTERN DIPLOMAT THAT "C-F ISN'T WORKING. IT HASN'T BEEN IMPLEMENTED AS IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN." WESTERN AND VIETNAMESE SOURCES EXPECT UPSURGE RATHER THAN DECLINE OF FIGHTING. QUOTES WELL-INFORMED UNCLASSIFIED

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OFFICIAL AS SAYING "IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS OR A YEAR, A DECISION WILL BE MADE. EITHER THE COMMUNISTS WILL OPT FOR A MAJOR MILITARY SOLUTION OR THEY WILL DECIDE TO SEEK A POLITICAL SOLUTION. I DON'T THINK THEY'VE REALLY MADE THAT DECISION YET."

23. CHARLES YOST (CSM) MAINTAINS U. S. CAN NO LONGER DETERMINE FATE OF SVN, LAOS OR CAMBODIA, AND "IT WOULD BE FOOLISH INDEED TO BEHAVE AS THOUGH IT COULD." AFTER VAST AMOUNTS OF U. S. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE THEY HAVE RECEIVED, HARD TO CLAIM THEY DO NOT HAVE "REASONABLE CHANCE" TO SURVIVE. SUGGESTS RESPONSIBILITY OF U. S. IS NOW TO ENSURE THAT, WHATEVER HAPPENS IN INDOCHINA STATES, REMAINING COUNTRIES OF REGION HAVE MEANS TO RETAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE AND AUTONOMY.

24. LONDON OBSERVER (LAT, MAR. 28) REPORTS FROM BANGKOK THAT WHILE THAILAND SEEMS DISENGAGED FROM INDOCHINA, IT IS BESET BY COMMUNIST INSURGENCY THAT HAS DEFIED THAI MILITARY ACTION. COMMUNIST BANDS, CONSISTING MAINLY OF CHINESE-THAI, WITH SOME VIETNAMESE-THAI, ARE ONE SYMPTOM OF TROUBLE IN AREA DISEASED BY IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICT AND TERROR. ACCORDING TO SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS, INSURGENTS HAVE GRADUATED FROM "BLOODY NUISANCE" TO "GRAVE PROBLEM." AS COMMUNISTS ARE PEKING - NOT HANOI-DIRECTED, CAN THAIS COME TO SOME ARRANGEMENT WITH CHINESE TO END VIOLENT COMMUNIST INCURSION? HARD TO IMAGINE THANOM GOVERNMENT RUSHING TO WELCOME PRC EMBASSY, THOUGH THAI PING-PONG TEAM WENT TO CHINA LAST FALL, AND SOME THAI BUSINESSMEN WENT TO CANTON TRADE FAIR. THAIS HAVE ALLOWED US TO REOPEN TWO AIR BASES TO ACCOMMODATE USAF UNITS FROM VN BASES; ON OTHER HAND, THERE HAS BEEN OPEN AND VIRULENT CRITICISM OF AMERICAN BEHAVIOR IN VN. BUT BASES ARE LIKELY TO REMAIN. ALL THIS, LIKE KITES, IS WAY ABOVE HEADS OF HAPPY THAI FAMILIES IN SUNDAY MARKET PARK. ROGERS

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